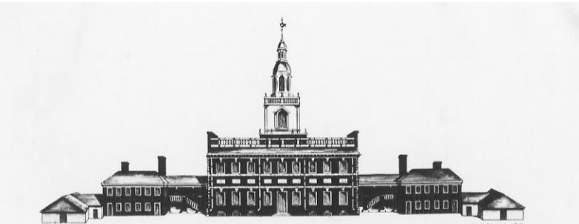




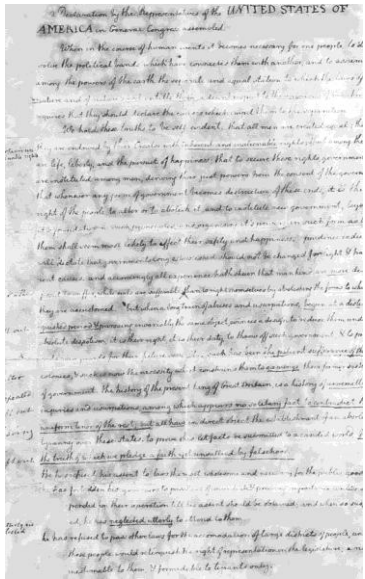
The Declaration of Independence Through Time



The State House (Independence Hall) as it appeared in 1776

Intended to announce and justify the birth of a new nation, the Declaration of Independence has grown into an emblem of core principles of the United States and continues to influence millions throughout the world. The presentation of the document through time has mirrored its rise in importance amongst American relics. Experience the history of the Declaration of Independence and learn about the people who shaped its famous words.

June 11-28, 1776: A Draft Copy



Jefferson draft sent to Richard Henry Lee
American Philosophical Society

On June 11, 1776, the Second Continental Congress entrusted a committee of five delegates (Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman) with composing the Declaration of Independence. The committee chose thirty-three year old Thomas Jefferson to draft what he called an expression of “the American mind.” Though he “turned to neither book or pamphlet,” Jefferson relied on his knowledge of philosophy as well as the sentiments of the Virginia Constitution, the Declaration of Rights and Richard Henry Lee’s resolution proposed to Congress on June 7. Jefferson later recalled, “I drew it; but before I reported it to the committee I communicated it separately to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams requesting their corrections.” The revised copy was submitted to Congress on June 28, 1776.

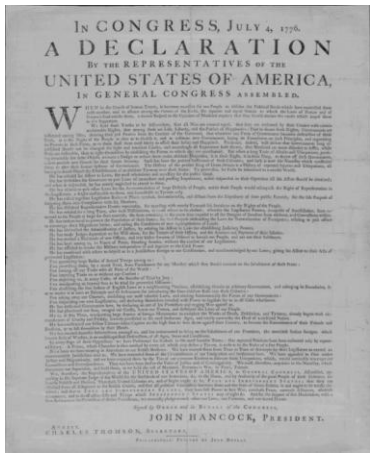
The Extant (Existing) Documents

There are six extant drafts. Only one copy is referred to as the “original rough draft” with copy edits by Franklin, Adams and the Congress; it is located in the Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress. Four additional drafts were sent by Jefferson to colleagues and do not contain edits by Congress. Later, Jefferson also made his own notes on the Declaration debates and included them in his autobiography in 1821.

Look for...

Inside the Declaration House, see a re-creation of the rooms where Jefferson lived while drafting the famous document. View paintings of four committee members at the Second Bank Portrait Gallery. During the summer months at Library Hall, the American Philosophical Society also displays a Jefferson draft that was sent to Richard Henry Lee.

July 4-5, 1776: The Dunlap Broadside



After the Declaration of Independence was formally adopted on July 4, 1776, the Congress voted to authenticate the document by adding the signatures of the president of the Congress, John Hancock, and Secretary Charles Thomson. They further ordered, “That copies of the declaration be sent to several assemblies, conventions and committees or councils of safety, and to the several commanding officers of the continental troops.” That evening the Declaration was taken to a print shop at Second and Market Streets where John Dunlap printed an estimated 100-200 copies. The authenticated copy was not saved.

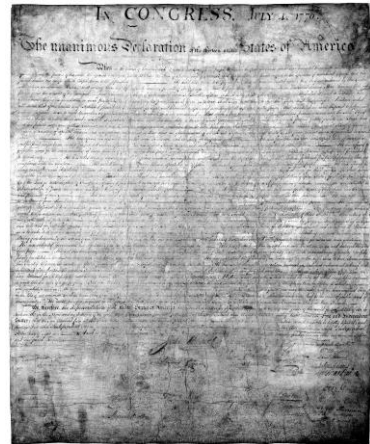
The Extant Documents

There are 26 known Dunlap broadsides, three of which are in British repositories. The Continental Congress did not send any copies to King George III.

Gaze upon...

At the Great Essentials Exhibit in the West Wing of Independence Hall, gaze upon the document that Colonel John Nixon read during the first public reading on Independence Square (July 8, 1776). Additionally, view portraits of John Hancock and Charles Thomson at the Second Bank Portrait Gallery.

August 2, 1776: The Engrossed Version



U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

On July 19, the Congress ordered the Declaration to be fairly engrossed (formally handwritten) on parchment and the title changed from *A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled* to *The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America*. Timothy Matlack, assistant to Charles Thomson, engrossed the document. On August 2, 1776, most of the members of the Continental Congress assembled in Independence Hall and “the declaration of independence being engrossed and compared at the table was signed.”

The Extant Document

The engrossed copy is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

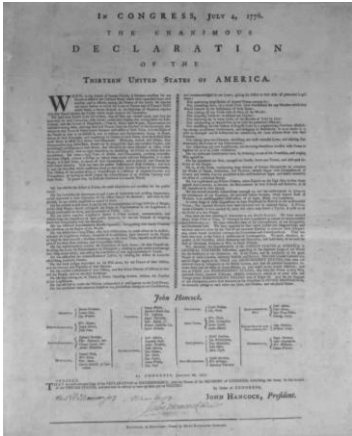


Timothy Matlack
By Charles Willson Peale, 1826

Join in...

During a tour of Independence Hall, stand inside the Assembly Room where the Declaration was signed. After the tour, view the Syng Inkstand displayed in the West Wing. See the man behind the handwriting, Timothy Matlack, at the Second Bank Portrait Gallery.

January 18, 1777:
The Goddard Broadside



Library of Congress

From December 20, 1776 to March 4, 1777, Congress was in session in Baltimore, Maryland. After the American victories at Trenton and Princeton, Congress ordered an authenticated copy of the Declaration of Independence printed with the names of the signers. On January 18, 1777, Mary Katherine Goddard printed these broadsides and the Congress sent copies to each state. This was the first time that the names of those who signed the Declaration were made publically known.

The Extant Documents
There are only 9 known Goddard broadsides.

Journey to . . .
Visit Franklin Court’s printing office to learn about the process of creating broadsides. Printed copies of the Declaration are also available for purchase.



18th Century Press

June 1819:
The Binns Declaration

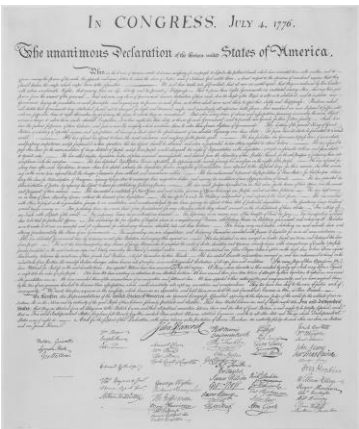


To appeal to growing American patriotic sentiments, John Binns began work on “a splendid and correct copy of the Declaration of Independence, with fac-similes of all the signatures, the whole to be encircled with the arms of the thirteen States and of the United States” in June of 1816. Binns employed as many as five artists to assist with the design, most notably Thomas Sully. The state seals surrounding the text are a symbolic representation of national unity. James Porter printed the 1819 Binns Declaration in Philadelphia.

The Extant Documents
There are an estimated one hundred copies.

Experience firsthand. . .
At the Declaration House, experience the rising nationalism of the nineteenth century expressed in an original Binns Declaration. See other examples of Thomas Sully’s works on display at the Second Bank Portrait Gallery.

May 26, 1824:
The Stone Facsimile



By the 1820s, the engrossed version of the Declaration was becoming fragile and faded. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams commissioned William J. Stone to engrave an official facsimile on copperplate for the United States government. It took Stone three years to complete and on May 26, 1824, the United States Congress ordered the distribution of two hundred copies printed on parchment. In 1843, Peter Force was commissioned to print an additional 1,500 for a nine volume series he was compiling called “American Archives.” Force never completed the series, printing only an estimated 500 copies on rice paper and vellum.

The Extant Documents
Fewer than 40 original Stone Copies are presently known. Half of the Force examples exist.

Examine how. . .
On the second floor of the Declaration House, examine a Peter Force printing of the Declaration and see how it would have appeared when first signed.

Resources

American Philosophical Society
Treasures of the APS: Three Declarations of Independence, 1776
<<http://www.amphilsoc.org/exhibits/treasures/declarat.htm>>

Library of Congress
Declaration of Independence: Right to Institute New Government
<<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffdec.html>>

National Park Service
A Multitude of Amendments, Alterations and Additions: The Declaration of Independence
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/dube/inde2.htm>

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
The Charters of Freedom, “A New World is at Hand”: Declaration of Independence
<<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>>

All images courtesy of Independence National Historical Park unless otherwise noted.

Did you know?

- Robert Livingston was on the committee of five that drafted the Declaration, but he never signed the engrossed version.
- Several delegates, including Robert Morris and George Read, voted against the adoption of the Declaration, but signed it.
- The engrossed Declaration of Independence returned to Philadelphia for the Centennial celebration (July 4, 1876) and was publically read by Richard Henry Lee (grandson of the signer) on Independence Square.